

-----Original Message-----

From: Tom Capen [mailto:torecap@yahoo.com]

Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2005 11:03 PM

To: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov

Subject:

BRTF Members, my name is Tom Capen, I am a Commercial Fisherman for 28 years and the Pres. of the Port San Luis Comm. Fishermen's Assoc. I also graduated from Cal Poly SLO with a degree in Marine Biology in 1978. I am very concerned about the whole MLPA process and I feel the focus needs to be in four areas.

1. Existing MPA's (60) represent 4% of state waters or 160 square miles. These existing 60 MPA's probably satisfy the requirements of the MLPA and need to be researched to see if any baseline data was collected or existed prior to the establishment of that particular MPA. Then that older data needs to be compared to recent data to make observations on the effectiveness of that MPA during that period of time. My fear is that the F&G has a track record of not following up on the existing MPA's. I feel they have created them and then abandoned them. I strongly feel that the state of Ca. should not even consider new MPA's until they take a good hard look at their existing ones.

2. There are approx. 380,000 California sea lions in the state. These animals consume 2.5 billion pounds, of seafood annually, approx. 5 times the commercial take of combined species. It is conclusive that the California sea lion population has the most significant impact on our states fisheries. Also, important to note, one of the sea lions favorite foods happens to be juvenile rockfish as published in the F&G study out at San Miguel Island in 1988. Unless this significant problem is responsibly dealt with, no matter how politically incorrect it may be, MPA's will not be successful.

3. Existing F&G regulations have been developed and enforced for many years which include size limits, gear restrictions, season closures, limited entry on vessels, bag limits for sport fishermen, species restrictions, area closures, etc. These have severely limited fishermen to fish. Additionally, if you look at state waters only approx. 25% of state waters are utilized by commercial and sport fisherman, and only 2% of combined state and federal waters are actually used by fisherman. The rest of the ocean gets left alone, year after year, kind of a de-facto MPA. This data was compiled by some simple calculations using a nautical chart with alot of local knowledge and experience.

4. Finally, municipal and agricultural runoff, thermal pollution from power plants, coastal development pose the second largest (sea lion #1) threat to our coastal resources. Water pollution by all these sources should be addressed and monitored.

Thank you for taking my comments and I will continue to participate in this MLPA process Tom Capen